

Message Text

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y PARA 1 LINE 13

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SUBJ: THE URUGUAYAN MILITARY: A LACK OF COHESION

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

REF: MVD 1658

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. THE URUGUAYAN MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT SEEMS TO HAVE ENTERED A PERIOD OF INDECISIVENESS, PROBABLY DUE TO THE FACT THAT THE NEW, POST-CHIAPPE ARMY LEADERSHIP HAS NOT YET GONE THROUGH ITS SHAKEDOWN PERIOD AND BECAUSE THERE STILL IS NO AGREED POSITION VIS-A-VIS THE MILITARY'S FUTURE ROLE IN GOVERNMENT. AT PRESENT, THE JOINT STAFF (ESMACO) MAKES SOME DECISIONS, THE SERVICE CINC'S OTHRRS AND THE JUNTA DE GENERALES (THEORETICALLY THE MILITARY'S FOCAL POINT FOR DECISION-MAKING) STILL OTHERS. ORDERS AND ADVICE, FREQUENTLY CONFLICTING, ARE PASSED TO CIVILIANS IN GOVERNMENT FROM VARIOUS MILITARY SOURCES. THE OBVIOUS LACK OF DECISION AND UNITY TEMPORARILY APPEARS TO HAVE GIVEN THE PRESIDENT
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A FREER HAND AND HE HAS MOVED TO SPARK CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM AND

TO MAKE ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES IN THE PAST FEW WEEKS. HOWEVER, THE MILITARY IS WELL AWARE OF ITS PROBLEM AND THAT VERY FACT COULD INDUCE THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT TO DEFINE ITS POSITION. END SUMMARY

2. WITH THE ARMED FORCES HAVING RECENTLY MOVED FORMALLY INTO THE ECONOMIC DECISION MAKING PROCESS THROUGH THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL AND HAVING PLACED A NUMBER OF MILITARY OFFICERS IN IMPORTANT GOVERNMENT POSTS, IT WOULD SEEM THAT THE MILITARY IS THE DRIVING FORCE IN THE NATION'S EFFORTS TOWARDS ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CHANGE. HOWEVER, A BETTER DESCRIPTION OF THE PRESENT STATE OF AFFAIRS IS THAT THE MILITARY PRESENCE IS THE SPUR PRODDING SUCH EFFORTS BUT NO ONE HAND IS ON THE REINS.

3. FOLLOWING THE DEATH OF THE VICE PRESIDENT IN MAY, A DISCUSSION OVER SUCCESSION CONTRIBUTED TO SERIOUS INTERNAL SPLITS IN THE ARMY AND LED TO THE REPLACEMENT OF ARMY CINC CHIAPPE AND OTHER SENIOR OFFICERS. THE MILITARY, SHAKEN BY ITSEXPERIENCE, SET UP THE JUNTA DE GENERALES, A MECHANISM DESIGNED TO GIVE THE THREE SERVICE CINC'S GUIDANCE ON MAJOR POLICY AND PERSONNEL DECISIONS TO BE CONVEYED TO THE PRESIDENT FOR IMPLEMENTATION. THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT THIS MODUS OPERANDI IS NOT FUNCTIONING. AN ESMACO OFFICER TOLD THE DCM THAT THE SYSTEM WAS NOT FUNCTIONING BECAUSE OF THE VARIOUS POWER CENTERS IN THE MILITARY. SOMETIMES ESMACO INSTRUCTS MINISTRIES TO ACT BUT MATTERS OF GREATER IMPORTANCE ARE CARRIED TO THE CINC'S FOR RESOLUTION AND THE MINISTRIES ARE INSTRUCTED. HOWEVER, SHOULD ANY GENERAL OFFICER HEAR ABOUT AND DISAGREE WITH THE CINC'S, HE REPORTEDLY CAN TAKE THE MATTER TO THE JUNTA DE GENERALES WHICH THEORETICALLY MAKES IT THE MAJOR DECISION-MAKING ORGAN. THE VERY CUMBERSOMENESS OF THE SYSTEM IS A DETERRENT TO MILITARY CONCISENESS AND COHERENCE.

4. MARCIAL BUGALLO, MINISTER OF LABOR UNTIL MID-JULY, TOLD AN EMBOFF THAT HE AND OTHER MINISTERS REPEATEDLY GOT CALLS FROM THE JOINT STAFF (ESMACO) URGING A CERTAIN ACTION AND THEN FROM A SERVICE CINC OR OTHER SENIOR OFFICER URGING A CONTRARY ACTION. THE DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND BUDGET RECENTLY TOLD THE AID DIRECTOR THAT THE MILITARY OPPOSED AN AID LOAN UNDER CONSIDERATION. THAT WAS FOLLOWED BY AN ESMACO CALL TO THE DCM URGING APPROVAL OF THE
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LOAN. THE MILITARY IS NOT UNITED ON POLICY.

5. PRESIDENT BORDABERRY ADDRESSED THE NATION ON JUNE 27, URGING CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM, AND FONMIN BLANCO FURTHER OUTLINED ADMINISTRATION THINKING ON THE SUBJECT IN A MAJOR ADDRESS ON JULY 18, CONSTITUTION DAY. THE EXECUTIVE HAD CLEARED BOTH SPEECHES WITH THE CINC'S. HOWEVER, THE CINC'S FAILED TO CLEAR THEM DOWN THE LINE, PROMPTING SEVERAL ESMACO OFFICERS TO PROTEST IN WRITING

AND ONE TO RESIGN (SEE IR 6 900 0126 74). DESPITE THE NEW MECHANISM TO TAKE AND COMMUNICATE AGREED-TO ARMED FORCES POSITIONS THE CINC'S APPARENTLY CONTINUE TO ACT ON THEIR OWN OR, AS SOME OFFICERS CLAIM, THEY "ARE BEING SOLD A BILL OF GOODS BY THE SMART POLITICIANS."

6. ON CONSTITUTION DAY, 4TH DIVISION COMMANDER GENERAL ALVAREZ PUT ON A MILITARY SHOW IN MALDONADO. THE PRINCIPAL SPEAKER, A MILITARY OFFICER, IN THE PRESENCE OF THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR, ALSO A MILITARY OFFICER, PRAISED THE ARMED FORCES AS THE LEADERS OF CHANGE AND THE FUTURE DIRECTIONS OF THE NATION. THAT LINE IS ACCEPTABLE

TO MANY OFFICERS, INCLUDING KEY MEN OF FLAG AND GENERAL RANK. NEVERTHELESS, GENERALS RODOLFO AND EDUARDO ZUBIA HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE TRADITIONAL PARTIES, ATTEMPTING TO ESTABLISH A DIALOGUE WITH THE POLITICOS. THE COLORADO PARTY DIRECTORATE CLAIMS THAT OVER 80 SENIOR OFFICERS, INCLUDING MEMBERS OF THE JUNTA DE GENERALES, ARE IN TOUCH WITH PARTY PEOPLE, TRYING TO FIND A MEANS BY WHICH THE MILITARY CAN EXTRICATE ITSELF FROM ITS PREDICAMENT WITH HONOR AND GET THE COUNTRY BACK ON THE ROAD TO CONSTITUTIONALISM. THE ARMED FORCES KNOW WHERE THEY ARE BUT DO NOT SEEM TO BE AGREEING AS TO WHERE THEY SHOULD GO FROM HERE. DISSENTS HAVE NOT BEEN APPEASED BUT THERE IS EITHER A TEMPORARY CEASE-FIRE OR A LACK OF LEADERSHIP.

7. THE NAVY, ALTHOUGH HEADED BY HARD-LINING ADMIRALS GONZALEZ AND MARQUIZ, REMAINS BASICALLY CONSTITUTIONALIST. DIVISIONS HAVE BEEN SERIOUS ENOUGH TO HAVE CAUSED SOME DISCIPLINARY INCIDENTS. WHILE THINGS HAVE NOT DETERIORATED TO THAT DEGREE IN THE OTHER SERVICES, IT IS CLEAR THAT COMPANY AND FIELD GRADE OFFICERS ARE CRITICAL OF THEIR GENERAL AND FLAG RANK SUPERIORS, INCLUDING THE CINC'S. ANOTHER CENTER OF DISCONTENT SEEMS TO HAVE DEVELOPED IN ESMACO, WHERE A GROUP OF FAIRLY SENIOR OFFICERS WITH TIME FOR REFLECTION

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HAVE BEEN OPENLY CRITICAL OF THE CINC'S FAILURE TO STAFF THINGS BEFORE MAKING DECISIONS.

8. THE CURRENT STATE OF DISARRAY IS A TWO-EDGED SWORD FOR THE PRESIDENT. IT GIVES HIM MORE FREEDOM OF ACTION AND HE IS MOVING, HAVING MADE A NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONAL AND CABINET CHANGES IN THE PAST MONTH, AND HAVING SPARKED THE LONG PROCESS OF CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM. HOWEVER, THE DETERIORATING SITUATION WITHIN THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT, ADDED TO RESENTMENT IN SOME MILITARY QUARTERS OVER RECENT PRESIDENTIAL ACTIONS (AND THE CINC'S CONCURRENCE THEREWITH), COULD WELL FORCE THE ARMED FORCES INTO DEFINING THEIR POSITION. HOW THIS MIGHT BE DONE AND WHAT THE END RESULT MIGHT BE ARE, AT THIS POINT, UNPREDICTABLE.

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